

# St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

## Newsletter

Autumn Term 2



### HEALTHY ME

This term, the school celebrated 'Healthy Me Week'. The children learnt how to keep themselves healthy and safe. There were 5 focuses for the week, which included: Anti-Bullying, Speak Out Stay Safe, Celebrating Differences, Online Safety and Mental Health Awareness.

To launch the week, the children and staff wore odd socks to raise awareness. Year 5 and Year 6 were also visited by the NSPCC and the children took part in a range of interesting workshops. The representatives commented on the children's mature responses and positive attitudes.



#### Attendance

Current whole school attendance figure:  
**95%**

### EYFS Nativity

St. George class (EYFS) had a wonderful time performing 'The Wiggly Nativity' to their families, friends and the school. The children danced with enthusiasm and sang beautifully, with lots of wriggling, making everyone smile! A huge well done to our youngest members of our school family, we were so proud of each and every one of you!



### Curriculum Celebration

It was wonderful to welcome incredible numbers of you to our Curriculum Celebration. We hope that you enjoyed visiting the classrooms, looking around the school, viewing learning and speaking to staff. The children were very proud to show off their school and all that they have achieved so far this academic year.

We look forward to welcoming you again next term to celebrate what we get up to during our 'Step Back in Time' topic.



### DIVERSITY WEEK

During our diversity week, the children were lucky enough to have sessions delivered by Mrs Jo Elijah, who provided interactive sessions for all year groups. Each session was tailored to the children's learning and gave them chances to explore and build on their Judaism learning.

In Year 5, they learnt all about Passover and what Jewish people eat, how the table and plate is set and what all the foods represent. They also got the chance to try some of the foods, including bitter herbs and Matzo. The children absolutely loved the interactive sessions and getting their questions answered.

Mrs Elijah thoroughly enjoyed her time with us and was incredibly impressed with our respectful, kind and thoughtful children.



### Writing at STM

At STM, we are always looking at ways to improve the quality of the teaching and learning and the educational offer that our children receive. This year, one of the areas of focus is on Writing. The technical side of writing has always been a strength at school; however, we have recognised that we want to develop our children's 'writing for pleasure' and the enjoyment of the children using their imaginations and creativity.

As a result, all of our children are now receiving Creative Writing lessons, where they get to play games to develop their imaginations and creativity and then write their own original stories about whatever they wish and however they wish: with a friend or alone, using technology or pen and paper.

In addition to this, we are also teaching 'Oracy to Writing' lessons each term, which focus on our children becoming storytellers. This is achieved though using a range of drama activities and developing their presentational speaking and listening skills by listening to an expert storyteller and building on his ideas.

### Partnership with our Parish

We were delighted to once again lead the Family Mass at St. Edward's Church on the first Sunday of Advent. We were blown away by the incredible numbers in attendance and received beautiful feedback from many Parishioners. It was the first time that Fr. Elvis had heard our children sing and he was amazed! Thank you to all who took part and also the staff for supporting and preparing for it.

It was also wonderful to see so many of you at our Carols by Candlelight. It was a very special way to remind us all of the true meaning of Christmas.



# Message from the Chair of Governors

Hello STM Community,

I hope this message finds you well.

As we come to a close on 2023, I would like to reflect briefly on what has been a very busy year for the school. We started with an independent H&S inspection in the first part of the year, followed by an Ofsted in June, and our CSI inspection in November. The results of all these inspections were extremely positive, and I would like to say thank you to the staff for their efforts in preparing for each inspection, it is not easy to do so whilst still running a school day. Whilst the inspections are challenging, the results of each inspection only demonstrate the care and attention all our staff put into the school and children. I would also like to say thank you to the parents and carers who have also been very supportive of the school during these busy times, it's much appreciated.

As Chair, I am often challenged with the question, "What are your visions for the school?" For us as a Governing Body, it's seeing the children enjoying being at school, having fun, making friends, learning new skills, and growing their understanding of the world, whilst being in a safe environment. I think it is clear that we are well on our way to achieving that vision, which is exciting to be a part of. Going into 2024, it is important that as a school community, we continue to work together for the development of both the children and the school. While there are always some challenges ahead, there are lots of opportunities as well.

Finally, I would like to that this opportunity to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year, we look forward to seeing you all in 2024.

Mr Crofton Alexander

## Carol Singing

Our Year 5 children visited Elm Bank Care Home to join some of the residents to sing carols and to perform some of their production songs. The children represented the school beautifully and filled Elm Bank with their joyful voices. We look forward to continuing to join with Elm Bank for further events in the future.



## Term Dates Academic Year 2023 – 2024

Term	Start Date for Children	End Date for Children
Term 1	Monday 4 <sup>th</sup> September	Friday 20 <sup>th</sup> October
Term 2	Monday 6 <sup>th</sup> November	Wednesday 20 <sup>th</sup> December
Term 3	Thursday 4 <sup>th</sup> January	Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> February
Term 4	Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> February	Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> March
Term 5	Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> April	Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> May
Term 6	Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> June	Wednesday 24 <sup>th</sup> July

## World Week

This term, the children have been taking part in "World Week". This is a week to focus on a current issue which will impact on the children's futures, providing the children with a deeper understanding and mechanisms to make changes in their own lives. Children looked at topics such as deforestation, climate change, litter and water pollution and all earned a badge towards their Eco Hero certificate. We have been inspired to make a change and alongside the Eco Stewards, we are hoping to implement changes at school to help our environment.

## The Ark

The Ark is a community group for families, from both the school and local communities.

The group meet on a Thursday morning from 9am to 10.45am in the school hall.

All are welcome.

£2 per family

Contact - [thearktots@gmail.com](mailto:thearktots@gmail.com) for more details.

## ECO Committee

This term, the children elected a team of Eco Stewards who have already been making positive changes in our school. One of their biggest successes this term has been the recycling project, led largely by Mrs Eppey. As well as recycling card and paper, the STM Eco Stewards have taken this a step further by introducing recycling for soft plastics. The Stewards created some large, re-usable bags which are left out at lunch times for the children to put empty plastics into. We have already filled multiple bags that have been recycled instead of going into landfill. We are really proud of all the children for supporting our efforts and getting involved.



## A Prayer for Christmas

Holy Jesus,  
by being born one of us,  
and lying humbly in a manger,  
you show how much God loves the world.  
Let the light of your love always shine in our hearts,  
until we reach our home in heaven,  
and see you on your throne of glory.  
Amen.



## Mission Ambassadors

Thank you so much for all of the gifts and donations that you gave for Elm Bank care home. The presents were wrapped with love by all our elves on Elf Day and hand delivered by our STM Mission Ambassadors too. All your donations were so gratefully received by the residents at Elm Bank and we have truly made a difference to their Christmas this year! We are looking forward to supporting our next Charity in the Spring Term and will send out details in the New Year.



## Friends of St. Thomas More (FSTM)

It has been a very busy term for FSTM, preparing for all the Christmas treats for the children. It's been a pleasure to hear they have enjoyed the panto, Christmas Fair, Christmas disco and raffle.

We thank Palmichael, Howdens and Lilacs for their kind donations. A huge thank you goes out to all the children who contributed with their amazing stalls and helped raise funds at our Christmas Fair. Well done to you all!

We would also like to thank the families who have engaged with FSTM this year. It's been great to see so many new faces involved. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas and we look forward to welcoming even more of the school community in the New Year.

Please continue to support our school as all funds raised will go towards exciting projects, trips, equipment, treats and events for our children.

If you would like to play a vital part in enhancing your child's time at our lovely school and help raise much needed funds; we invite you to join Friends of St Thomas More (FSTM).

## Visits and Visitors

The children in St. George class (EYFS) have been busy learning about people who help us in the community and what their jobs are. They enjoyed visits from Kettering Fire station, our local PCSO and Nurse Sue. St. George Class also enjoyed a trip to West Lodge Rural Centre. They had a fun Christmas themed day, joining in with the nativity, meeting Father Christmas and of course meeting different animals!

To celebrate the end of our current topic 'Lights, Camera, Action', Year 4 took a trip to the local cinema to see Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile. Their learning in class had been based on a range of Musicals and the children had a wonderful time looking at yet another film being brought to life on the big screen with the incredible addition of song, music and dance.

The whole school took part in an assembly from CAFOD, with a representative leading workshops on Catholic Social Teaching across Key Stage 2. The representative was blown away with the children's knowledge and thoughtful questioning and responses.

As part of our Christmas Celebrations, we had a visit from a touring pantomime. The children loved cheering, clapping and booing throughout the production of 'Aladdin.' Thank you to FSTM for providing this wonderful surprise.



## A message from Mrs Howes -

It has been another busy term here at St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School. In November, we received our Catholic School Inspection. We were very proud of how brightly our school shone, especially the children. Our faith is central to all we do and it radiated throughout.

The term has finished with lots of wonderful productions and gatherings. It has been very special to celebrate this very magical time of year together. Today, we joined together to celebrate our Governor Award Nominees. Our children always act as ambassadors of our school and live our mission statement in all they do. A huge well done to all the nominees and a special well done to Mia, our overall winner.

A huge thank you to all of our families for your ongoing support. Another thank you must also go to my hardworking and dedicated staff. My final thank you is to the children. They make us proud every single day with their positive attitudes, behaviours for learning, kindness and enthusiasm. Wishing you all a magical, safe and enjoyable Christmas and a very happy new year. We look forward to welcoming you all back on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2024, for another exciting term!



## Year 4, 5 and 6 Christmas Celebration

The children (and staff) have been working and practising lots this month in order to share with you all a Christmas Celebration that will bring Christmas spirit, joy and an opportunity to reflect on what Christmas means to us all this Advent season. We hope you enjoyed our dancing, poetry and singing!

## Christmas Production

KS1 and Year 3 were delighted to present their Nativity performance of 'Don't Be Afraid' by Naomi Johnson. This inspiring story explores the nativity through songs and drama and reflects on how emotions such as fear, doubt and panic can sometimes distract us from the true message of Christmas. As the story unfolds we learn that through our faith in God we can overcome our fears and embrace God's love as well as peace and joy at Christmas time. The children worked incredibly hard to learn the songs and their lines for the performance. They sang so beautifully and performed to a very high standard and every single one of them should be proud of their efforts. The staff would like to thank parents and carers for providing such wonderful costumes and supporting their children with learning their lines at home. The performances were wonderful and the children represented the Christmas spirit as well as the ethos our school beautifully.

